

UPSTAIRS BULLETIN

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An Educational Group

CLASSES and REHEARSALS went on as usual during all those bitter January days - the 15th our coldest day we had almost a hundred percent attendance from beginner classes to the advanced. We like that "do or die" attitude. True there were a few frozen cars and some illnesses but mighty few.

At the end of January this season is already half over, and before you know it, the spring concerts will be on - Hope everyone is saving one or both dates. Ticket sale will begin about March 1st. Reserved seats will be \$3.00, \$2.50 and \$2.00.

Each year is more of a challenge for us with a large percentage of new untried faces on the program. We think there will be some pleasant surprises this year. MR. STONE is working on a new ballet to music by Trygve Torjussen, a Norwegian composer. The ballet is tentatively called "To the Sun". At this writing its cast includes JULIE WALDER, MAGGIE SMITH, CAROLYN LOBB, ROBIN BECKER, BETH COLLIER, VANNESSA MERIA, SUZETTE POMPEI, JAN ORR and ANNETTE KUBAJAK. Others may be added as he goes along. Four boys, new on our programs are also in this ballet - CHARLES PIZARRO, NORMAN HINDS, CARLETON SMITH and ROBIN COATES.

Besides "To the Sun" and "Alice in Wonderland" will be the hit of last years program, "The Cumberland Gap Suite", with last years cast. New with the same group of youngsters will be the "Roumanin Rhapsody" by Enesco. The Rhapsody uses ten boys and seven girls. The balance of the program will be rounded out with the usual "Diversissements".

Our holidays were a tremendous success this year. Having tried for several years to find warmth and sunshine between Christmas and New Years,

this year was perfect at West Palm Beach Florida. BETTINA ROSAY and her sister drove down from New York and were there at the same time. ELOISE and BILL MOORE live there and we had a grand time with them talking of old times. To make the week perfect three old friends from the Civic Opera days came up to spend an afternoon with us. They were LOUISE SHOTT RYAN, BARBARA WARREN SCHMIDT and MARION FINHOLT LEWIS. The memories and reminiscences that were turned over that afternoon would fill a book. Many of that period of dancers are now retired in Florida and it would be great if we could have a complete reunion of them all. The Christmas mail brought news of MRS. NOVIKOFF from her son Andrew. He said she is well past 80 now but in many ways is as chipper and vivacious as ever. However her eyesight has failed very badly and while she still insists on living alone in New Buffalo, she no longer leaves her house. COLLEEN KELLY THORNBURGH writes that she will be moving back into the Chicago area in February. TERRY KIM, our little Korean friend seems to be still in the New York area. We had wished she could remain in Chicago but the immigration officials insisted she remain in New York. It is now DR. DEAN DIGGINS currently a professor at Brooklyn College, teaching psychology. Dean appeared on our programs and had a good start at the career with the Madison Trio. We were delighted to hear from SPERO PASTOS from California where he is teaching school. When here he was a student and a promising pop-singer with several records to his credit. JACQUELINE MC KANNAY went to Europe last May and while in Paris was engaged by the Theatre Francais de la Danse and toured with that company. Mr. & Mrs. Mac Kannay now live in lovely Concord, Mass. ELISA QUEYQUEP WHITE is back teaching part time in the

Dance Therapy Master program at Hunter College. She states that teaching is not her cup of tea so she keeps a hand in working with patients one day a week at Bronx State Hospital. LILLIAN DEAO'MURA writes that she ran into MURIEL BACCIOCCO NUTLZ in Mrs. Romanoff's class in San Jose. Lillian has one child - Keith - Muriel five. Lillian was one of three children in the 40's in our school that had Polio. She spent a year in bed having her back fused and later joined a west coast dance group until she married. BARBARA MACFARLANE visited and took class the end of January - discouraged with the prospects of a career with the Cincinnati University Ballet going professional. When she gets her Master degree in May she intends to head out. We hear that PAT CUMMINGS was (or is) in Israel staging "Rothschild" for a company there. DIANE KORE wrote a nice note at the holidays enclosing pictures of KAREN KRYCH and NAOMI SORKIN that she found in a shop. She is happy though not dancing at the moment. Says she sees JOHN SLOTHOWER and BILL BADOLATO often. JIM SHANNON is still with Gloria Swanson in "Butterflies are Free" playing in and around New York. He recently finished a movie and he is to let us know more about it if he does not fall on the cutting room floor. The wise boy he is - fills his spare time studying voice, dramatics and dance. GREGG and LIZBEE OSTER are living in a Dutch community at Findley Lake, New York. Remember their father passed away before they left Chicago. DARRELL & SALLY NOTARA returned to New York shortly before Christmas for an engagement. NAOMI SORKIN and BONNIE MATHIS shared performances at Kennedy Center dancing the part of Desdemonda in the Limon Ballet - "The Moor's Pavanne". The First Chamber Dance Quartet will be doing the same ballet and RUTH ANN KOESUN will be dancing one of the leads. Towards the middle of March NAOMI SORKIN will dance the lead in the second act of "Swan Lake" with the Milwaukee Ballet. KAREN TIMS called from NY the middle of January in great excitement. She has a job - a great feat in this day and age. She is

to join the Netherlands Dance Theatre and is on her way to Europe. The really nice thing is it will be a long European tour before an American tour. Their director had been watching her for two days in classes under Larry Rhodes and Maggie Black. That's the sensible way to choose a dancer. Here at home SUZI BOLIN has been a resident member of the Mill Run Playhouse Children's Theatre for the past two years. She has performed almost daily to 1300 children in the leading roles of Snow White, Sleeping Beauty, Oliver, Rumpelstiltskin, and Cinderella. At the time she was in Cinderella she was also playing a part in "The Paisley Convertible" at the Country Club Theatre. JO JEAN RETRUM is with the Milwaukee Ballet Company and going to school at the University. MARCIA RAE (Golden) BALABAN who is a prominent member of the Sybil Shearer Dance Group was first a pupil of ROSE VRUNO and then in 1949 came to SC and remained until she finished High School. She soon married moving to the North Shore where she began to work with Shearer. She still looks more balletic than modern. CHERIE MC CULLOUGH, KAREN KRYCH and PAMELA JUSTICK will all be married sometime in spring. CARREN CHESHER HART is expecting sometime in early summer. By chance I ran into Margaret (Firebaugh), now Ellison while shopping. She and Kenneth, one of our former accompanists and an army buddy of mine have separated and he is now teaching at SMU and also remarried.

The winter skiing season is on and already a broken leg, a broken arm, several bent toes and a smashed in face. This is not the sport for dancers. Had pretty good response to the "Where are they now" paragraph in the last Bulletin. Heard that AUDRE JOHNSON is an actress in and around New York - nothing big but working - also on TV. ERIK KRISTEN has an executive position in the J. C. Penny Company and JOHN SHARPE recently worked for him on an industrial show. Also heard that ALEXIS HOFF has given up dance after the demise of the Harkness company. Do wish someone could

tell us about RONALD FRASIER. Have been asked by the State Conservation of Parks Department to do a program at Starved Rock in May. Numbers that were requested were interestingly enough - "Dr. Eli Duffy - The Shooting of Dan McGrew - The Singing Yankees and the Cumberland Gap Suite". Final arrangements will not be made until we hear more about the facilities.

"ALICE IN WONDERLAND"

Reverend Charles Lutwidge, better known as Lewis Carroll wrote three, possibly four versions of Alice's adventures in Wonderland. It all began on July 4, 1862 when Carroll and a friend took three little girls on a boating trip up the Isis, a tributary of the Thames. The girls were daughters of Henry George Liddell, Dean of Christ Church at Oxford, where Carroll taught mathematics. Carroll was especially fond of Alice Liddell, then ten, and it was mainly for her that he began his story of another Alice's tumble down the rabbit hole, inventing whimsical details as he went along.

The interminable tale lasted through many later boating trips and Carroll assured Alice he would write it down for her, but it was to be much later that the task was finished. The first manuscript was called "Alice's Adventures Under Ground". This version was given to Alice for Christmas in 1864.

While Carroll was preparing his second version of the story his friends were urging to find a publisher. And this version with the John Tenniel drawings was published by Mac Millan and Company in London on July 4, 1865 to commemorate their first boating trip, three years earlier. The fourth and final version came out with the same publisher in 1889.

Since that time the story has been read in every language the world over, by children and adults alike. There are many who believe that it is more for the adult mind because of the philosophy

and reasoning woven into the story. If Carroll wrote four versions, there have been hundreds of versions presenting it as a play and with many lavish and serious productions. Because much of the charm lies in the words and their surrealistic meaning it is difficult material for a ballet. To get this charm transformed into movement and pantomime is a real challenge. Certain Characters in the story are not really danceable unless they are given some human qualities.

My first introduction to "Alice" began in October of 1933 while I was appearing in Alice Gertsenberg's version which was directed by Luther Greene and ran for six weeks at the Studio Theatre on Van Buren Street. I was one of the Tweedles along with Alan Wayne and it was made purely a dancing part because they did not trust our ability to speak. By the end of the run, I began to think of all the parts in terms of movement rather than words. While I was director of the Children's Civic Theatre, we did "Alice" as a play a number of times, mostly because there were few trained dancers in that group of children.

The thought of doing it as a ballet was mulled around in my mind for several years before I finally got around to working on it. Music was of first importance and this is always the first hurdle in starting any ballet with a story. Having once heard Rossini's "La Cenerentola" I felt I could adapt a score from it. In the search for it was told by every music store that it was not to be bought anywhere. So I wrote a friend in a publishing house in New York who once said he could find anything we might want. He answered promptly that the only copy on the North American Continent was right here in the Chicago Public Library; which we promptly had photostated and began work. It was perfect for our needs.

In February of 1951 we began in earnest and we worked until June when we had to stop for the Summer Course. Rehearsals were resumed in September and

the first performance came off on November 27th and October 1st of that year at Mandel Hall. The costumes were designed by Martha Woollett and the many props and scenery had to be made for rehearsals because they were all to be functional in the ballet. The making of costumes and properties was a great task. Minnie Reilly and Lottie Daniels did the work on the costumes and Fred Akart the Props. Special tights had to be hand made for the Mad Hatter, Mock Turtle, Dormouse and Alice and we were fortunate in having a real artist at knitting - Bernadine Crois, in her late 70's at that time and no task was too difficult for her. The head pieces and hats which were no easy job were ably executed by a former pupil Howard Bourne. The masks for the Turtle and Frog were executed by Bud Tygett who now has his own Ballet Group in Birmingham, Alabama.

I was fortunate in having Joan Ehemann, a perfect Alice whose performance had to hold the 8 scenes of the ballet together. After those first performances at Mandel Hall, the ballet was to lay in the trunks until the spring of 1952 when we gave a couple of performances at Wilson Junior College. The only change in cast at that time was John Widmer as the White Rabbit who had been recalled into the Navy. It was up to me to dance the next showings of the ballet. In April of the same year with the same cast, and yours truly we gave it twice at the Eighth Street Theatre. The ballet was to lay fallow again until the spring of 1959 when there was an entirely new cast with Karen Krych and Polly Harding dancing the part of Alice. In all these performances there were memorable performances by Joan Ehemann as Alice, Chaunce Conklin as the March Hare, Joe Kaminski as the Mad Hatter, Sheila Reilly as the White Queen, Yolanda Salla as the Duchess, Gildo Di Nunzio, Charles Bennett and John Neumeier as the Mock Turtle. Others also were good but these were exceptionable.

The really amazing thing about that first cast (considering the drop-outs in the world today) is that after 20 years sixteen out of the cast of twenty-two are still in dance in one aspect or another. They are dancers, teachers, directors, choreographers, actresses and actors, and one is an assistant conductor at the Metropolitan Opera in New York. In the later casts John Neumeier and Charles Bennett have distinguished themselves in the dance world. In a few years it will be interesting to see which of the present cast will go on into the dance world.

In the present production there will be some alternating of roles - MAGGIE SMITH and CYNTHIA BENSON will share the part of Alice, a very hard and demanding role. BETH COLLIER and ROBIN BECKER will alternate between the Red Queen and the Mock Turtle - quiet opposite type roles. KATHERINE ARENS and REBECCA CONKLIN will change off as the Duchess. Then there will be two groups of flowers. Double casting is harder to rehearse but it is good for the dancer to learn how to understudy on the sideline. It safeguards the company in case of illness or an accident. It can be troublesome if there is too much difference in size because of the costume. More might be done if this were not the case. And naturally absolute final casting cannot always be made until the moment of the performance. Casts are always subject to change.

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Bits of wisdom from Alice.

Contrariwise, if it was so, it might be: and if it were so, it would be: but as it isn't, it ain't. That's logic.

Here, you see, it takes all the running you can do, to keep in the same place. If you want to get somewhere else, you must run at least twice as fast as that.

I don't see how he can ever finish,
if he dosen't begin.

Never imagine yourself not to be
other wise than what it might appear
to others that what you were or might
have been was not otherwise than what
you would have appeared to them to be
otherwise.

Speak in French when you can't think
of the English for a thing, turn out
your toes as you walk - and remember
who you are.

When I use a word, it means just
what I choose it to mean - neither more
nor less.

Beauty is only skin deep, but it's
a valuable asset if you're poor and
haven't any sense.

Kim Hubbard.

Yes, and even beauty at sometime
must come to an end. A ways back in the
20's and up until the last few years Paul
Swan was a dance curiostity in the dance
world about New York. Advertising him-
self as "The World's Most Beautiful Man"
he gave regular recitals in Carnegie
Hall up to 1969. Swan was an art student
at the Chicago Art Institute back in 1901
and his recent obituary credited him as
being a dancer, actor, painter, and
sculptor. He died at 88 years of age.

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